

In the Claims

The following is an amendment to and a complete listing of the claims which replaces all prior listings of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A Francis runner ~~which comprises~~
comprising:

a crown_i;

a band_i and

blades extending between said crown and said band, said blades defining liquid flow channels therebetween, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein a ratio (e/L) of ~~[[the]]~~ a maximum thickness (e) of each blade to ~~[[the]]~~ an average developed length (L) of ~~[[its]]~~ an average fibre ~~[[((23)]]~~ of each blade is ~~included~~ between 0.1 and 0.2, and ~~in that, at the level of the~~ a leading edge ~~[[((21)]]~~ of each blade, said average fibre is oriented, over essentially ~~[[the]]~~ an entire height of the leading edge, along a straight line (Δ_{23}) forming an angle (α) greater than 90° ~~in relation relative to~~ to ~~[[the]]~~ a line (U) defining a linear speed of advance (U) of said leading edge in the direction of rotation

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of the leading edge of the runner.

2. (currently amended) The runner ~~Runner~~ according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said ratio (e/L) is greater than 0.13, ~~preferably than 0.15.~~

3. (currently amended) The runner ~~Runner~~ according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that the average~~ wherein said angle (α) between the ~~linear speed of advance~~ line (U) of ~~[[a]]~~ each blade ~~[[(2)]]~~ at the ~~level of its~~ leading edge ~~[[(21)]]~~ and the average fibre ~~[[(23)]]~~ of said blade at the ~~level of said~~ leading edge is ~~included~~ between 110° and 140° .

4. (currently amended) The runner ~~Runner~~ according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ each blade ~~[[(2)]]~~ is formed by a skin ~~[[(26)]]~~ constituting ~~[[the]]~~ two lateral faces ~~[[(24, 25)]]~~ of said blade and defining a hollow internal volume (V_2) of said blade.

5. (currently amended) The runner ~~Runner~~ according to Claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said skin ~~[[(26)]]~~ is metallic.

6. (currently amended) The runner ~~Runner~~ according to Claim 4,

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~~characterized in that~~ wherein said skin $[(26)]$ is made of composite material.

7. (currently amended) The runner ~~Runner~~ according to Claim $[[1]]$ 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said skin $[(26)]$ is formed by assembling $[(27_1, 27_2)]$ two plates $[(26_1, 26_2)]$ respectively constituting $[[the]]$ a pressure side surface $[(24)]$ and $[[the]]$ a suction side surface $[(25)]$ of said blade $[(2)]$.

8. (currently amended) The runner ~~Runner~~ according to Claim $[[1]]$ 4, ~~characterized in that~~ said volume (V_2) is lined with a filling material $[(28)]$.

9. (currently amended) A Francis hydraulic turbine equipped with a runner, said runner comprising: ~~(1) according to Claim 1~~
a crown;

a band; and

blades extending between said crown and said band, said blades defining liquid flow channels therebetween, wherein a ratio (e/L) of a maximum thickness (e) of each blade to an average developed length (L) of an average fibre of each blade is between 0.1 and 0.2, and at a leading edge of each blade, said

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average fibre is oriented, over essentially an entire height of the leading edge, along a straight line (Δ_{23}) forming an angle (α) greater than 90° relative to a line (U) defining a direction of rotation of the leading edge of the runner.

10. (new) The runner according to Claim 2, wherein said ratio (e/L) is greater than 0.15.